

# Comet defies death, brushes up to sun and lives

December 16 2011

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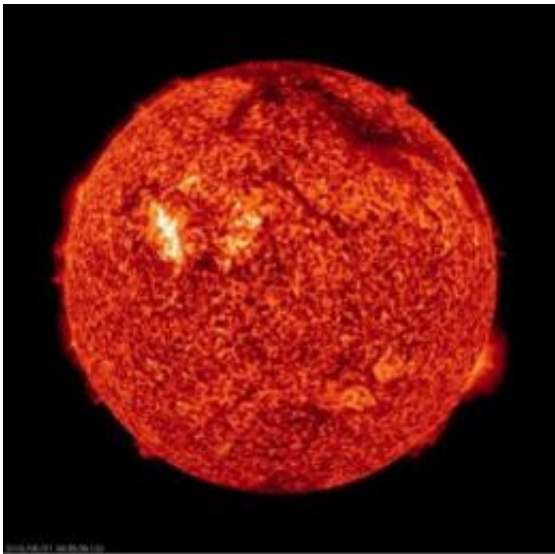


Image of sun courtesy of NASA.

A small comet survived what astronomers figured would be a sure death when it danced uncomfortably close to the broiling sun Thursday night.

Comet Lovejoy was only discovered a couple of weeks ago. It was supposed to melt as it came so close to the sun that the temperatures would hit several million degrees.

But astronomers watching live with [NASA](#) telescopes were shocked when a bright spot emerged on the sun's other side. Lovejoy lived.

The comet came within 75,000 miles of the sun. For a small object often described as a dirty snowball, that brush with the sun should have been fatal.

Astronomers say it probably wasn't deadly because the comet was larger than they thought.

**Read an update:** [Comet Lovejoy plunges into the sun and survives \(w/video\)](#)

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